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Afghanistan: Current Issues and U.S. Policy Concerns

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Afghanistan: Current Issues and U.S. Policy Concerns

Summary

U.S. and international officials are hopeful that Afghanistan is emerging from more than 22 years of warfare and instability, although substantial risk to Afghan stability remains. Before the U.S. military campaign against the orthodox Islamist Taliban movement began on October 7, 2001, Afghanistan had been mired in conflict since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The Taliban ruled most of Afghanistan during 1996 until its collapse at the hands of the U.S. and Afghan opposition military campaign in November - December 2001. During its rule, the Taliban was opposed primarily by the Northern Alliance, a coalition of minority ethnic groups. During 1998 until its rule ended, the Taliban had come under increasing international pressure to cease hosting of terrorist leader Osama bin Laden and members of his Al Qaeda organization, the prime suspect in the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

The defeat of the Taliban has enabled the United States and its coalition partners to send forces throughout Afghanistan to search for Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters and leaders that remain at large, including bin Laden himself. Afghan citizens are enjoying new personal freedoms that were forbidden under the Taliban; women are returning to schools and their jobs and participating in politics. With the Taliban defeated, the United States and its coalition partners are distributing additional humanitarian aid through newly opened routes and, in conjunction with international agencies, beginning a major reconstruction effort.

Although the Northern Alliance has emerged as the dominant force in the country, the United States and United Nations mediators persuaded the Alliance to share power with Pashtun representatives in a broad-based interim government. On December 5, 2001, major Afghan factions, meeting under U.N. auspices in Bonn, signed an agreement to form an interim government that will run Afghanistan until a traditional national assembly ("loya jirga"), under way during June 11-16, 2002, selects a new government. The interim government, which took office on December 22, 2001, has been chaired by a Pashtun leader, Hamid Karzai.

As the war against remaining Al Qaeda and Taliban elements continues, the United States is working to stabilize the interim government, arrange humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, expand a new Afghan national army, and support the international security force (ISAF) that is helping the new government provide security. The United States has reopened its embassy in Kabul and allowed the Afghan administration to reopen Afghanistan's embassy in Washington.

Contents

Background to Recent Developments	1
The Rise of The Taliban	3
Mullah Muhammad Umar/Taliban Leaders	4
Coalescence of the Northern Alliance	5
Political Settlement Efforts	6
Pre-September 11 Efforts	6
The “Six Plus Two” and Geneva Contact Groups	7
King Zahir Shah and the <i>Loya Jirga</i> Processes	7
Post-September 11 U.N. Efforts	7
Bonn Conference	8
The Interim Government	8
International Security Force/Afghan National Army	9
Diplomatic and Governmental Activity	10
Regional Context	11
Pakistan	11
Iran	13
Russia	14
Central Asian States	15
China	17
Saudi Arabia	17
U.S. Policy Issues	18
Harboring of Al Qaeda	19
Human Rights/Treatment of Women	21
Destruction of Buddha Statues	21
Hindu Badges	22
Counternarcotics	22
Retrieval of U.S. Stingers	23
Landmine Eradication	24
Assistance and Reconstruction	24
Casualties	25
U.S. Assistance Issues	25
Reconstruction Aid	26
Promoting Long-Term Economic Development	27
U.S. and International Sanctions	32
Map of Afghanistan	35

List of Tables

Table 1. Major Factions in Afghanistan	28
Table 2. U.S. Aid to Afghanistan in FY1999-FY2002	29
Table 3. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan FY1978-1998	31

Afghanistan: Current Issues and U.S. Policy Concerns

Background to Recent Developments

Afghanistan became unstable in the 1970s as both its Communist Party and its Islamic movement grew in strength and became increasingly bitter opponents of each other.¹ The instability shattered the relative peace and progress that characterized the rule of King Mohammad Zahir Shah, who reigned during 1933 - 1973. Zahir Shah was the last King in Afghanistan's monarchy, which was founded in 1747 by Ahmad Shah Durrani. Prior to the founding of the monarchy, Afghanistan did not exist as a distinct political entity, but was a territory inhabited by tribes and tribal confederations often linked to neighboring nations. Zahir Shah was the only surviving son of King Mohammad Nadir Shah (1929-1933), whose rule followed (after a brief rule in 1919 by a Tajik strongman named Bacha-i-Saqo) that of King Amanullah Khan (1919-1929), who was considered a secular modernizer and who presided over a government in which all ethnic minorities participated. Zahir Shah promulgated a constitution in 1964 that established a national legislature, and he promoted freedoms for women, including freeing them from the veil. However, possibly believing that doing so would enable him to limit Soviet support for communist factions in Afghanistan, Zahir Shah also entered into a significant political and arms purchase relationship with the Soviet Union.

While undergoing medical treatment in Italy, Zahir Shah was overthrown by his cousin, Mohammad Daoud, a military leader. Daoud established a dictatorship characterized by strong state control over the economy. After taking power in 1978 by overthrowing Daoud, the communists, first under Nur Mohammad Taraki and then under Hafizullah Amin (leader of a rival communist faction who overthrew Taraki in 1979), attempted to impose radical socialist change on a traditional society. The communists tried to redistribute land and bring more women into government positions. These moves spurred recruitment for Islamic parties and their militias opposed to communist ideology. The Soviet Union sent troops into Afghanistan on December 27, 1979 to prevent a seizure of power by the Islamic-oriented militias that later became known as "mujahedin"² (Islamic fighters), and thereby keep Afghanistan pro-Soviet. Upon their invasion, the Soviets ousted Hafizullah Amin and installed its local ally, Babrak Karmal, as Afghan president.

¹ For more information, see CRS Report RL31389, *Afghanistan: Challenges and Options for Reconstructing a Stable and Moderate State*, by Richard Cronin; and RL31355, *Afghanistan's Path to Reconstruction: Obstacles, Challenges, and Issues for Congress*, by Rhoda Margesson.

² The term refers to an Islamic guerrilla; literally "one who fights in the cause of Islam."

After the Soviets occupied Afghanistan, the U.S.-backed mujahedin fought them effectively, and Soviet occupation forces were never able to pacify all areas of the country. The Soviets held major cities, but the outlying mountainous regions remained largely under mujahedin control. The mujahedin benefitted from U.S. weapons and assistance, provided through the Central Intelligence Agency, working closely with Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence directorate (ISI). That weaponry included man-portable shoulder-fired anti-aircraft systems called "Stingers," which proved highly effective against Soviet aircraft. The Islamic guerrillas also hid and stored weaponry in a large network of natural and manmade tunnels and caves throughout Afghanistan. The Soviet Union's losses mounted, and domestic opinion shifted against the war. In 1986, perhaps in an effort to signal some flexibility on a possible political settlement, the Soviets replaced Babrak Karmal with the more pliable former director of Afghan intelligence (Khad), Najibullah Ahmedzai (who went by the name Najibullah or, on some occasions, the abbreviated Najib).

On April 14, 1988, the Soviet Union, led by reformist leader Mikhail Gorbachev, agreed to a U.N.-brokered accord (the Geneva Accords) requiring it to withdraw. The Soviet Union completed the withdrawal on February 15, 1989, leaving in place a weak communist government facing a determined U.S. backed mujahedin. A warming of superpower relations moved the United States and Soviet Union to try for a political settlement to the internal conflict. From late 1989, the United States pressed the Soviet Union to agree to a mutual cutoff of military aid to the combatants. The failed August 1991 coup in the Soviet Union reduced Moscow's capability for and interest in supporting communist regimes in the Third World, leading Moscow to agree with Washington on September 13, 1991, to a joint cutoff of military aid to the Afghan combatants.

The State Department has said that a total of about \$3 billion in economic and covert military assistance was provided by the U.S. to the Afghan mujahedin from 1980 until the end of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1989. Press reports and independent experts believe the covert aid program grew from about \$20 million per year in FY1980 to about \$300 million per year during fiscal years 1986 - 1990. Even before the 1991 U.S.-Soviet agreement on Afghanistan, the Soviet withdrawal had decreased the strategic and political value of Afghanistan and made the Administration and Congress less forthcoming with funding. For FY1991, Congress reportedly cut covert aid appropriations to the mujahedin from \$300 million the previous year to \$250 million, with half the aid withheld until the second half of the fiscal year. Although the intelligence authorization bill was not signed until late 1991, Congress abided by the aid figures contained in the bill.³

³ See "Country Fact Sheet: Afghanistan," in *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*. Volume 5, No. 23, June 6, 1994. Page 377.

With Soviet backing withdrawn, on March 18, 1992, Afghan President Najibullah publicly agreed to step down once an interim government was formed. His announcement set off a wave of regime defections, primarily by Uzbek and Tajik ethnic militias that had previously been allied with the Kabul government, including that of Uzbek militia commander Abdul Rashid Dostam (see below).

Population:	25.8 million
Ethnic Groups:	Pashtun 38%; Tajik 25%; Uzbek 6%; Hazara 19%; others 12%
Religions:	Sunni Muslim 84%; Shiite Muslim 15%; other 1%
Per Capita Income:	\$280/yr (World Bank figure)
External Debt:	\$5.5 billion (1996 est.)
Major Exports:	fruits, nuts, carpets
Major Imports:	food, petroleum

Source: CIA World Factbook, 2000.

Joining with the defectors, prominent mujahedin commander Ahmad Shah

Masud (of the Islamic Society, a largely Tajik party headed by Burhannudin Rabbani) sent his fighters into Kabul, paving the way for the installation of a mujahedin regime on April 18, 1992. Masud, nicknamed “Lion of the Panjshir,” had earned a reputation as a brilliant strategist by successfully preventing the Soviets from occupying his power base in the Panjshir Valley of northeastern Afghanistan. Two days earlier, as the mujahedin approached Kabul, Najibullah failed in an attempt to flee Afghanistan. He, his brother, and a few aides remained at a U.N. facility in Kabul until the day in September 1996 that the Taliban movement seized control of the city – Taliban fighters entered the U.N. compound, captured Najibullah and his brother, and hanged them.

The victory over Najibullah brought the mujahedin parties to power in Afghanistan but also exposed the serious differences among them. Under an agreement among all the major mujahedin parties, Rabbani became President in June 1992, with the understanding that he would leave office in December 1994. His refusal to step down at the end of that time period—on the grounds that political authority would disintegrate in the absence of a clear successor—led many of the other parties to accuse him of attempting to monopolize power. His government faced daily shelling from another mujahedin commander, Pakistan-backed Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, a radical Islamic fundamentalist who headed a faction of Hizb-e-Islami (Islamic Party) who was nominally the Prime Minister. Hikmatyar was later ousted by the Taliban from his powerbase around Jalalabad—despite similar ideologies and Pashtun ethnicity - and he fled to Iran. Four years (1992-1996) of civil war among the mujahedin resulted, destroying much of Kabul and creating popular support for the Taliban. In addition, the dominant Pashtun ethnic group accused the Rabbani government of failing to represent all of Afghanistan’s ethnic groups, and many Pashtuns allied with the Taliban.

The Rise of The Taliban

The Taliban movement was formed in 1993-1994 by Afghan Islamic clerics and students, many of them former mujahedin who had moved into the western areas of

Pakistan to study in Islamic seminaries (“madrassas”). They are mostly ultra-orthodox Sunni Muslims who practice a form of Islam, “Wahhabism,” similar to that practiced in Saudi Arabia. The Taliban was composed overwhelmingly of ethnic Pashtuns (Pathans) from rural areas of Afghanistan. Pashtuns constitute a plurality in Afghanistan, accounting for about 38% of Afghanistan’s population of about 26 million. Taliban leaders viewed the Rabbani government as corrupt and responsible for continued civil war in Afghanistan and the deterioration of security in the major cities. With the help of defections by sympathetic mujahedin fighters, the movement seized control of the southeastern city of Qandahar in November 1994 and continued to gather strength. The Taliban’s early successes encouraged further defections by local leaders, and by February 1995 it reached the gates of Kabul, after which an 18-month stalemate around the capital ensued. In September 1995, the Taliban captured Herat province, on the border with Iran, and expelled the pro-Iranian governor of the province, Ismail Khan. In September 1996, a string of Taliban victories east of Kabul led to the withdrawal of the Rabbani government to the Panjshir Valley north of Kabul, with most of its heavy weapons intact. The Taliban took control of Kabul on September 27, 1996.

The Taliban lost much of its international support as its policies unfolded.⁴ It imposed strict adherence to Islamic customs in areas it controls, and used harsh punishments, including executions, on transgressors. The Taliban regime established a Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and the Suppression of Vice, a force of police officers to enforce its laws and moral rules.⁵ It banned television, popular music, and dancing, and required male beards. Immediately after capturing Kabul, the Taliban curbed freedoms for women there, including their ability to work outside the home (except in health care) and it closed schools for girls.

Mullah Muhammad Umar/Taliban Leaders. During the war against the Soviet Union, Taliban founder Mullah Muhammad Umar fought in the Hizb-e-Islam (Islamic Party) mujahedin party led by Yunis Khalis. During Taliban rule, Mullah Umar held the title of Head of State and Commander of the Faithful. He lost an eye during the anti-Soviet war, rarely appeared in public even before U.S. airstrikes began, and did not take an active role in the day-to-day affairs of governing. However, in times of crisis or to discuss pressing issues, he summoned Taliban leaders to meet with him in Qandahar. Considered a hardliner within the Taliban regime, Mullah Umar forged a close personal bond with bin Laden and was adamantly opposed to handing him over to another country to face justice. Born near Qandahar, Umar is about 50 years old. His ten year old son, as well as his stepfather, reportedly died at the hands of U.S. airstrikes in early October 2001. Umar, having reportedly fled Qandahar city when the Taliban surrendered the city on December 9, 2001, is still at large, and he is believed to still be in the country, possibly in his native Uruzgan Province.

⁴ See U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2000. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, February 2001. Available online through the State Department’s web site at [<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/sa>].

⁵ Testimony of Zalmay Khalilzad, Director of RAND’s Strategy and Doctrine Program, before the Subcommittee on Near East and South Asia of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. October 22, 1997.

Coalescence of the Northern Alliance

The rise of the Taliban movement caused other power centers to make common cause with ousted President Rabbani and Masud. The individual groups allied with them in a "Northern Alliance" sometimes called the "United Front." The Persian-speaking core of the Northern Alliance was located not only in the Panjshir Valley of the northeast but also in largely Persian-speaking western Afghanistan near the Iranian border. The fighters in the west are generally loyal to the charismatic militia leader Ismail Khan, who regained the governorship of his former stronghold in Herat and surrounding provinces after the Taliban collapse of mid-November 2001.

One non-Tajik component of the Northern Alliance is the Uzbek militia force (the Junbush-Melli, or National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan) of General Abdul Rashid Dostam. Uzbeks constitute about 6% of the population, compared with 25% that are Tajik.) Dostam's break with Najibullah in early 1992 helped pave the way for the overthrow of the communist regime. He subsequently fought against Rabbani during his presidency in an effort to persuade him to yield power, but then allied with Rabbani and the Northern Alliance when the Taliban took power in Kabul. Dostam once commanded about 25,000 troops and significant amounts of armor and combat aircraft, but infighting within his faction left him unable to hold off Taliban forces. The Taliban captured his power base in August 1998, leaving him in control of only small areas of northern Afghanistan near the border with Uzbekistan. During the U.S.-led war against the Taliban, he, in concert with a Tajik commander Atta Mohammad and a Shiite Hazara commander Mohammad Mohaqqiq, recaptured Mazar-e-Sharif from the Taliban. There have been tensions among the three in governing the city and its environs since, sometimes resulting in minor clashes.

Shiite Muslim parties, generally less active against the Soviet occupation than were the Sunni parties, constituted another part of the Northern Alliance. In June 1992, Iranian-backed Hizb-e-Wahdat (Unity Party, an alliance of eight Hazara tribe Shiite Muslim groups), agreed to join the Rabbani government in exchange for a share of power. Hizb-e-Wahdat has traditionally received some material support from Iran, which practices Shiism and has an affinity for the Hazaras. In September 1998, Taliban forces captured the Hazara stronghold of Bamiyan city, capital of Bamiyan province, raising fears in Iran and elsewhere that Taliban forces would massacre the Hazara civilians. This contributed to the movement of Iran and the Taliban militia to the brink of armed conflict that month. After that time, Hizb-e-Wahdat forces occasionally retook Bamiyan city but were unable to hold it. They recaptured Bamiyan province during the Taliban collapse of mid-November 2001.

Another mujahedin party leader, Abd-i-Rab Rasul Sayyaf, heads a faction called the Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan. Sayyaf lived many years in and is politically close to Saudi Arabia, which shares his puritanical interpretation of Sunni Islam. This interpretation is also shared by the Taliban, which partly explains why many of Sayyaf's fighters originally defected to the Taliban movement when that movement was taking power. Sayyaf himself remained allied with the Northern Alliance and placed his remaining forces at Alliance disposal. He is considered personally close to Rabbani.

The political rivalries among opposition groups long hindered their ability to shake the Taliban's grip on power. In the few years prior to the beginning of the U.S. war against the Taliban, the opposition had steadily lost ground, even in areas outside Taliban's Pashtun ethnic base. The losses extended to the point at which the Taliban controlled at least 75% of the country and almost all major provincial capitals.

The Northern Alliance suffered a major setback on September 9, 2001, when Ahmad Shah Masud, the undisputed and charismatic military leader of Northern Alliance forces, was assassinated by suicide bombers at his headquarters. His successor was his intelligence chief, Muhammad Fahim, who is a veteran commander but lacked the overarching authority of Masud. Fahim's prestige was enhanced by the Northern Alliance's defeat of the Taliban in the U.S.-backed military campaign. Northern Alliance forces now control about 70% of Afghanistan, including Kabul, which they captured on November 12, 2001. Groups of Pashtun commanders took control of cities and provinces east and south of Kabul. One example is Ghul Agha Shirzai, the new governor of Qandahar province and environs.

Despite the overwhelming defeat of the Taliban, small Taliban and Al Qaeda contingents continue to hold out in small pockets in Afghanistan. The United States and its Afghan allies conducted "Operation Anaconda" in the Shah-i-Kot Valley south of Gardez during March 2 - 19, 2002, to eliminate a pocket of as many as 800 Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters. Some less intense military operations by the United States and its coalition partners have been conducted since, particularly in eastern Afghanistan. Some pockets are said to straddle the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, and press reports indicate that Pakistan has been allowing the United States to conduct low-level military or military support operations inside Pakistan since April 2002.

Political Settlement Efforts

As the war against remaining Al Qaeda guerrillas and Taliban remnants continues, a longstanding U.N. effort to form a broad-based Afghan government has borne some fruit.

Pre-September 11 Efforts. For the 8 years prior to the war, the United States worked primarily through the United Nations to end the Afghan civil conflict, because the international body is viewed as a credible mediator by all sides. It was the forum used for ending the Soviet occupation. However, some observers criticized U.S. policy as being insufficiently engaged in Afghan mediation to bring about a settlement. Since the fall of Najibullah, a succession of U.N. mediators – former Tunisian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Mestiri (March 1994-July 1996); German diplomat Norbert Holl (July 1996-December 1997); and Algeria's former Foreign Minister Lakhdar Brahimi (August 1997-October 1999) – sought to arrange a ceasefire, and ultimately a peaceful transition to a broad-based government. The proposed process for arranging a transition incorporated many ideas advanced by former King Zahir Shah and outside experts, in which a permanent government was to be chosen through a traditional Afghan selection process, the hallmark of which is the holding of a *loya jirga*, a grand assembly of notable Afghans.

These U.N. efforts, at times, appeared to make significant progress, but ceasefires and other agreements between the warring factions always broke down.

Brahimi suspended his activities in frustration in October 1999, and another U.N. mediator, Spanish diplomat Fransesc Vendrell, was appointed.

The “Six Plus Two” and Geneva Contact Groups. In parallel with direct U.N. mediation efforts, the “Six Plus Two” contact group consisted of the United States, Russia, and the six states bordering Afghanistan: Iran, China, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Reflecting the common concerns about Afghan-inspired regional instability, the “Six Plus Two” contact group met since early 1997 to discuss ways of bringing peace to Afghanistan. The Six Plus Two process was created after several informal meetings of some of the key outside parties in which the United States and others agreed not to provide weapons to the warring factions. (In June 1996, the Administration formally imposed a ban on U.S. sales of arms to all factions in Afghanistan, a policy already in force informally.⁶) The process was conducted in coordination with U.N. peace efforts for Afghanistan.

In 2000, possibly because of the lack of progress in the Six Plus Two process, another contact group began meeting in Geneva, and with more frequency than the Six Plus Two. The Geneva grouping includes Italy, Germany, Iran, and the United States. Another Afghan-related grouping multilateral mediating grouping consisted of some Islamic countries operating under the ad-hoc “Committee on Afghanistan” under the auspices of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). The countries in that ad-hoc committee include Pakistan, Iran, Guinea, and Tunisia.

King Zahir Shah and the Loya Jirga Processes. During the period of Taliban rule, the United States also supported initiatives coming from Afghans inside Afghanistan and in exile. During 1997, Afghans not linked to any of the warring factions began a new peace initiative called the Intra Afghan Dialogue. This grouping, consisting of former mujahedin commanders and clan leaders, held meetings during 1997 and 1998 in Bonn, Frankfurt, Istanbul, and Ankara. Another group, based on the participation of former King Zahir Shah, was centered in Rome (“Rome Grouping”), where the former King lived after his ouster in 1973. A third grouping, calling itself the “Cyprus Process,” consisted of former Afghan officials and other Afghan exiles generally sympathetic to Iran.

Post-September 11 U.N. Efforts. The September 11 attacks and the start of U.S. military action against the Taliban injected new urgency into the search for a government that might replace the Taliban. Many of the hopes for a post-Taliban government at first appeared to center on the former King. A 2-day (October 25-26, 2001) meeting of more than 700 Afghan tribal elders in Peshawar, Pakistan (“Peshawar Grouping”) issued a concluding statement calling for the return of the former King. However, even though the gathering was supportive of the former King, neither the King’s representatives nor those of the Northern Alliance actually attended the gathering because of their suspicions that the meeting was orchestrated by Pakistan for its own ends.

⁶ *Federal Register*, Volume 61, No. 125, June 27, 1996. Page 33313.

In late September 2001, Brahimi was brought back as the U.N. representative to help arrange an alternative government to the Taliban; Vendrell became his deputy, although he retired shortly thereafter. The State Department appointed Policy Planning Director Richard Haass to be the U.S. liaison with Brahimi and to assist in the search for an alternative regime that might hasten the demise of the Taliban and keep order in the event the Taliban collapses. A U.S. envoy to the Northern Alliance, Ambassador James Dobbins, was appointed in early November 2001 and, until April 2002, coordinated U.S. reconstruction assistance efforts. (Later, another envoy was appointed, NSC Senior Director for the Near East Zalmay Khalilzad, see below.) On November 14, 2001, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1378, calling for a “central” U.N. role in establishing a transitional administration and inviting member states to send peacekeeping forces to promote stability and secure the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Bonn Conference. As the U.S. war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda began to achieve success, delegates of the various major Afghan factions – most prominently the Northern Alliance and representatives of the former King – gathered in Bonn, Germany, at the invitation of the United Nations. The Taliban, nearly defeated by that time, was not invited. On December 5, 2001, the factions signed an agreement to form a 30-member interim administration, to govern until the holding in June 2002 of a *loya jirga*, to be opened by the former King. The *loya jirga* is to choose a new government to run Afghanistan for the next eighteen months until a new constitution is drafted and national elections held. It also will establish a 111-member parliament. The last *loya jirga* that was widely recognized as legitimate was held in 1964 to ratify a constitution. Communist leader Najibullah convened a *loya jirga* in 1987 largely to approve his policies; that gathering was widely viewed by Afghans as illegitimate.

In late January 2002, the 21 members of the commission, including two women, were chosen to prepare for the assembly. They initially traveled around Afghanistan to solicit opinions on how to convene it, and it was scheduled for June 10-16, 2002. By the beginning of June, 381 districts of Afghanistan had chosen the 1,550 delegates to the *loya jirga*. About two hundred of the delegates are women. After several delays due to security concerns, the former King returned to Afghanistan on April 18, 2002, and he conducted meetings with Afghan notables and local leaders.

The *loya jirga* began on June 11, 2002, its opening delayed one day due to factional bargaining. On its first day, the former King and Rabbani withdrew from leadership consideration and endorsed interim government chairman Hamid Karzai to continue as Afghanistan’s leader, paving the way for his selection as leader by the *loya jirga* delegates over two other candidates, one of which is a woman. On June 13, 2002, by an overwhelming margin, the *loya jirga* selected Karzai to lead Afghanistan until the elections at the end of 2003. The assembly is expected to make further changes to the existing cabinet in an effort to re-balance the ethnic composition of the government.

The Interim Government. The interim administration began operations on December 22, 2001. In the interim administration, a slight majority (17 out of 30) of the positions in the new cabinet are held by the Northern Alliance, with this block holding the key posts of Defense (Mohammad Fahim), Foreign Affairs (Dr. Abdullah

Abdullah), and Interior (Yunus Qanuni). The three are ethnic Tajiks, with the exception of Dr. Abdullah, who is half Tajik and half Pashtun. This trio, all of whom are in their mid-40s and were close aides to Ahmad Shah Masud, is considered generally well disposed toward the United States, although they also have ties to Iran and Russia, and all three are suspicious of Pakistan.

Northern Alliance leader Rabbani was not given a role in the interim administration, on the grounds that doing so would have weighted the interim administration too heavily to the Northern Alliance. Instead, the post of chairman of the interim administration went to Pashtun tribal leader Hamid Karzai, who is about 45 years old. Karzai, leader of the powerful Popolzai tribe of Pashtuns, had entered Afghanistan in October 2001 to organize resistance to the Taliban, and he was supported in that effort by U.S. special forces. He has relatives in and close ties to the United States. Other notables in the interim cabinet include:

- Finance Minister Hedayat Amin Arsala, a Pashtun affiliated with Zahir Shah. He was a foreign minister in the Rabbani government that preceded the Taliban (1992-1996).
- Minister of Women's Affairs Sima Samar, a Hazara who was an Afghan women's rights activist from her exile in Pakistan.
- Minister of Communications Abdul Rahim, an ethnic Tajik who is the former Ambassador of Afghanistan to the United States during the Rabbani government.
- Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Mir Wais Sadeq, a Tajik, who is the son of Herat Province governor Ismail Khan.
- Minister of Urban Development Hajji Abdul Qadir, a Pashtun, who is also governor of Nangahar Province, the capital of which is Jalalabad. Abdul Qadir has been criticized in some press accounts for agreeing to bin Laden's relocation to the Jalalabad area in 1996 after bin Laden's expulsion from Sudan. Abdul Qadir, a member of the Northern Alliance delegation to the Bonn Conference, had walked out of the conference to protest what he said was underrepresentation of Pashtuns at the meeting.
- Deputy Defense Minister Abdul Rashid Dostam, appointed in late December 2001 in response to Dostam's calls for more Uzbek representation in the transitional government

International Security Force/Afghan National Army. The Bonn conferees agreed to establish an international peace keeping force to maintain security, at least in Kabul. The force (International Security Assistance Force, ISAF), which has reached its agreed strength of about 5,000, is led by Britain but will be headed by Turkey in June 2002, following the *loya jirga*. The force is operating in conjunction with Afghan security forces in Kabul and is coordinating, to an extent, with the approximately 7,000 U.S. military forces in and immediately around Afghanistan. In an effort to assuage Turkish concerns about the costs of heading the

force, the United States offered Turkey \$228 million in new U.S. aid to compensate for those costs. Because of several threats to Afghanistan's internal security since the interim government was constituted, the interim government wants the force to eventually be expanded and deploy to other major cities. However, the Bush Administration has decided instead to help build an Afghan national army rather than expand ISAF. Training by U.S. special forces has begun, and the first 2,500 recruits (three ground combat battalions and two border patrol battalions) will complete their training by July 2002. The exact size of the army has not yet been decided, but common estimates say that the new army will need to number about 60,000 - 80,000 to be effective. It will take several years to build a force that large. On May 3, President Bush pledged to Karzai an additional \$2 million in U.S. aid to help equip the new army. Some analysts have expressed concern that the national army will likely not be ready in a timely enough manner to deal with the security threats now facing the country, although the Administration and others indicate that U.S. forces will be engaged in Afghanistan for a long enough period to ensure security until the Afghan army can assume its full mission.

At this time, ISAF has forces from the following 18 countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and the United Kingdom (leader). The Bonn conference's conclusions were endorsed by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1385 (December 6, 2001), and the international peacekeeping force was authorized by Security Council Resolution 1386 (December 20, 2001).

Diplomatic and Governmental Activity. Since the constitution of the interim government, several countries have reopened embassies in Kabul, including the United States. In conjunction with the formation of the interim administration, career diplomat Ryan Crocker was appointed Charge D'Affaires and NSC official Zalmay Khalilzad was appointed a special envoy to Afghanistan in December 2001 and has made a few extended visits there. In late March 2002, the new U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, Robert Finn, was confirmed by the Senate and sworn in in Kabul. The United States has permitted the interim administration to reopen the Afghan embassy in Washington and Northern Alliance spokesman Harun Amin was appointed Charge D'Affaires on January 14, 2002. A new Afghan ambassador, U.S.-educated and U.S.-based energy entrepreneur Ishaq Shahryar, has taken office. He previously was an adviser to Zahir Shah.

The priorities of the new government thus far have been expanding governmental capabilities, guiding reconstruction efforts, and attempting to bring security to all parts of Afghanistan. Karzai has sought and received some international funds to pay government workers who had not been paid in many months. The national airline, Ariana, is also in the process of resuming operations, although its fleet is very small. In a major setback to the new government's efforts to achieve stability, the Aviation Minister, Abdul Rahman, was killed on February 14, 2002, by what some reports said was a mob of Afghans angry that their flight to the Hajj in Saudi Arabia had been severely delayed. Karzai said the killing was the result of a plot by other interim administration officials, an assertion later contradicted by Foreign Minister Abdullah. Since then, there have been isolated clashes among rival factions and a failed attempt on the life of Defense Minister

Fahim. However, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld said in late April that the security situation has been improving.

On March 23, 2002, schools reopened following the Persian/Afghan new year (Nowruz). Girls returned to the schools for the first time since the Taliban came to power.

Regional Context ⁷

Even before September 11, several of Afghanistan's neighbors were becoming alarmed about threats to their own security interests emanating from Afghanistan. All of these governments endorsed the Bonn agreement, but some experts believe that the neighboring governments will likely attempt to manipulate Afghanistan's factions and its political structure to their advantage.

Pakistan⁸

Pakistan reversed course on Afghanistan in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. Pakistan initially saw the Taliban movement as an instrument with which to fulfill its goals. Pakistan has always sought an Afghan central government strong enough to prevent calls for unity between ethnic Pashtuns in Afghanistan and Pakistan, while at the same time sufficiently friendly and pliable to give Pakistan strategic depth against rival India. In the wake of the Soviet pullout in 1989, Pakistan was troubled by continued political infighting in Afghanistan that was enabling drug trafficking to flourish and to which Afghan refugees did not want to return. Pakistan saw Afghanistan as essential to opening up trade relations and energy routes with the Muslim states of the former Soviet Union.

Pakistan was the most public defender of the Taliban movement and was one of only three countries (Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are the others) to formally recognize it as the legitimate government. Prior to September 11, the government of General Pervez Musharraf, who took power in an October 1999 coup, previously resisted U.S. pressure to forcefully intercede with the Taliban leadership to achieve bin Laden's extradition. Pakistan's links to the Taliban were a major focus of a visit to Pakistan by Undersecretary of State Thomas Pickering in May 2000, although Pakistan made no commitments to help the United States on bin Laden. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1333, of December 19, 2000, was partly an effort by the United States and Russia to drive a wedge between the Taliban and Pakistan and to persuade Pakistan to cease military advice and aid to the Taliban. Pakistan did not completely cease military assistance, but it abided by some provisions of the resolution, for example by ordering the Taliban to cut the staff at

⁷ For further information, see CRS Report RS20411, *Afghanistan: Connections to Islamic Movements in Central and South Asia and Southern Russia*. December 7, 1999, by Kenneth Katzman.

⁸ For further discussion, see Rashid, Ahmed. "The Taliban: Exporting Extremism." *Foreign Affairs*, November - December 1999.

its embassy in Pakistan.⁹ Prior to the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, Pakistan had said it would cooperate with a follow-on U.N. Security Council Resolution (1363 of July 30, 2001) that provided for U.N. border monitors to ensure that no neighboring state was providing military equipment or advice to the Taliban.

Pakistan's modest pre-September 11 steps toward cooperation with the United States reflected increasing wariness that the Taliban movement was radicalizing existing Islamic movements inside Pakistan and was becoming an increasing embarrassment to Pakistan itself. Pakistan also feared that its position on the Taliban was propelling the United States into a closer relationship with Pakistan's arch-rival, India. Some Islamic movements in Pakistan were seeking to emulate the Taliban, according to press reports, and Pakistani terrorist groups, such as the Harakat al-Mujahedin (HUM), Jaish e-Mohammad, and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba,¹⁰ are allied with Al Qaeda, according to the State Department's report on international terrorism for 2000 ("Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2000"). HUM and other Pakistani Islamist groups are seeking to challenge India's control over its portion of Kashmir and, according to some observers, could provoke a war with India over Kashmir, as has nearly happened following the Pakistani Islamist attack on India's parliament on December 13, 2001.

These considerations, coupled with U.S. pressure as well as offers of economic benefit, prompted Pakistan to cooperate with the U.S. response to the September 11 attacks. Pakistan provided the United States with requested access to Pakistani airspace, ports, airfields. Pakistan has also arrested hundreds of Al Qaeda fighters fleeing Afghanistan and turned them over to the United States and deployed substantial forces to the Afghan border to capture Al Qaeda fighters attempting to flee into Pakistan. Pakistani authorities helped the United States track and capture top bin Laden aide Abu Zubaydah in early April 2002, and Pakistani forces reportedly are helping the United States track and fight Al Qaeda forces along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Some reports say bin Laden might have escaped into Pakistan but U.S. officials have expressed confidence that he will be captured eventually by Pakistan if he is there. Many feared that the U.S. military presence in Pakistan would place the government under increased political threat from pro-Taliban Islamist groups in Pakistan that sympathize with the Taliban and bin Laden. However, those fears did not materialize and the collapse of the Taliban appears to have alleviated that pressure. In return for Pakistan's cooperation, the Administration, in some cases with new congressional authority enacted after September 11, has waived most of the U.S. sanctions on Pakistan and has begun providing foreign aid that will total about \$1 billion, according to U.S. announcements.¹¹

⁹ Constable, Pamela. New Sanctions Strain Taliban-Pakistan Ties. *Washington Post*, January 19, 2001.

¹⁰ The State Department has designated HUM as a foreign terrorist organization.

¹¹ For more information on U.S. sanctions on Pakistan, see CRS Report RS20995, *India and Pakistan: Current U.S. Economic Sanctions*, by Dianne E. Rennack.

At the same time, Pakistan has sought to protect its interests by fashioning a strong Pashtun-based component for a post-Taliban government. Pakistan is wary that a post-Taliban government dominated by the Northern Alliance, which is backed by India, would amount to Indian encirclement of Pakistan. To counter that perceived threat, Pakistan was instrumental in ensuring that Northern Alliance leader Rabbani would not be chairman of the interim government. Pakistan also succeeded in building a role for the former King in selecting a permanent government, although the former King's role appears to be limited. Karzai visited Pakistan in late January 2002, and the two countries pledged to look to the future rather than to the recent history of strains.

Iran

Iran's key national interests in Afghanistan are to exert influence over western Afghanistan, which Iran borders and was once part of the Persian empire, and to protect Afghanistan's Shiite minority. Iran strongly supported the Northern Alliance and its Tajik (Persian-speaking) leaders who have traditionally been strong in western Afghanistan as well as northern Afghanistan. Since Taliban forces ousted Ismail Khan from Herat (the western province that borders Iran) in September 1995, Iran has seen the Taliban movement as a threat to its interests in Afghanistan. Iran provided fuel, funds, and ammunition to the Northern Alliance¹² and hosted fighters loyal to Khan, who was captured by the Taliban in 1998 but escaped and fled to Iran in March 2000. In September 1998, Iranian and Taliban forces nearly came into direct conflict when Iran discovered that nine of its diplomats were killed in the course of Taliban's offensive in northern Afghanistan. Iran massed forces at the border and threatened military action, but the crisis cooled without a major clash, possibly because Iran lacked confidence in its military capabilities.

The United States and Iran have long had common positions on Afghanistan, despite deep U.S.-Iran differences on other issues. U.S. officials have long acknowledged working with Tehran, under the auspices of the Six Plus Two contact group and Geneva group. Secretary of State Powell shook hands with Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi on November 12, 2001 during a Six Plus Two meeting on prospects for a new government in Afghanistan.

U.S. and Iranian common interests on Afghanistan might explain why Iran generally expressed support for the U.S. effort to forge a global coalition against terrorism, although it has publicly opposed U.S. military action against Afghanistan. Iran has confirmed that it offered search and rescue assistance in Afghanistan should the United States need it, and it has also agreed to allow U.S. humanitarian aid to the Afghan people to transit Iran. However, the United States and Iran are too far apart in general for tacit cooperation on Afghanistan to lead to a dramatic breakthrough in U.S.-Iran relations. Some Iranian leaders have been harshly critical of U.S. military action against the Taliban; in late September Supreme Leader Ali Khamene'i compared that action to the September 11 terrorist attacks themselves.

¹² Steele, Jonathon, "America Includes Iran In Talks On Ending War In Afghanistan." *Washington Times*, December 15, 1997. A14.

Amid reports Iran is seeking to exert influence over the new government by arming pro-Iranian Afghan factions, in early January 2002 President Bush warned Iran against meddling in Afghanistan. The President listed Iran as part of an “axis of evil” in his January 29, 2002 State of the Union message, partly because of Iran’s actions in Afghanistan. Since then, the Bush Administration has continued to accuse Iran of trying to build influence over the interim government and of failing to attempt to locate or arrest Al Qaeda fighters who have fled to Iran from Afghanistan. Partly in response to the U.S. criticism, in February 2002 Iran reportedly expelled a major critic of the interim administration, Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, from Iran. Hikmatyar subsequently returned to Afghanistan but escaped an early May 2002 U.S. strike by a CIA-controlled Predator-launched missile. For his part, Karzai has said that Iran is an important neighbor of Afghanistan and visited Iran in late February 2002, pledging to build ties with the Islamic republic.

About 1.5 million Afghan refugees are still in Iran; most of these have been permitted to integrate into Iranian society.¹³ In mid-1994, Iran reportedly began forcing Afghan refugees to leave Iran and return home, although Iran denies it has forcibly repatriated any Afghans and some repatriation reportedly is voluntary.

Russia

A number of considerations might explain why Russia has supported the U.S. effort against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, including the use of bases in Central Asia to conduct the war. Russia’s main objective in Afghanistan has been to prevent the further strengthening of Islamic or nationalist movements in the Central Asian states or Islamic enclaves in Russia itself, including Chechnya. For Russian leaders, instability in Afghanistan also reminds the Russian public that the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan failed to pacify or stabilize that country.

Russia’s fear became acute following an August 1999 incursion into Russia’s Dagestan region by Islamic guerrillas from neighboring Chechnya. Some reports link at least one faction of the guerrillas to bin Laden.¹⁴ This faction is led by a Chechen of Arab origin who is referred to by the name “Hattab” (full name is Ibn al-Khattab); Russia claimed to have killed Hattab in April 2002. In January 2000, the Taliban became the only government in the world to recognize Chechnya’s independence, and some Chechen fighters integrated into Taliban forces were captured or killed during the October - November 2001 war.

The U.S. and Russian positions on Afghanistan became coincident well before the September 11 attacks.¹⁵ Even before the U.S.-led war, Russia was supporting the

¹³ Crossette, Barbara, “U.S. and Iran Cooperating on Ways to End the Afghan War.” *New York Times*, December 15, 1997.

¹⁴ Whittell, Giles. “Bin Laden Link To Dagestan Rebel Fightback.” *London Times*, September 6, 1999.

¹⁵ Constable, Pamela. “Russia, U.S. Converge on Warnings to Taliban.” *Washington Post*, June 4, 2000.

Northern Alliance with some military equipment and technical assistance.¹⁶ U.S.-Russian cooperation led to the passage of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1267 on October 15, 1999. That resolution, adopted in response to the Taliban's harboring of bin Laden, banned commercial flights by the Afghan national airline and directed U.N. member states to freeze Taliban assets abroad (see section on *Sanctions*, below). When the Taliban repeatedly refused to turn over bin Laden, the two co-sponsored a follow-on – Security Council Resolution 1333 – that banned arms sales and military advice to the Taliban, among other provisions, but did not ban such aid to the Northern Alliance or other opposition factions.

On the other hand, the United States has not blindly supported Russia's apparent attempts to place a large share of the blame for the rebellion in Chechnya on the Taliban and Al Qaeda. The Clinton Administration did not endorse Russian threats, issued by President Vladimir Putin in May 2000, to conduct airstrikes against training camps in Afghanistan that Russia alleges are for Chechen rebels. President Bush has been highly critical of Russian tactics in Chechnya, although that position has softened substantially after September 11. Some outside experts believe that Russia exaggerated the threat emanating from Afghanistan in an effort to persuade the Central Asian states to rebuild closer defense ties to Moscow.

At the same time, some are wary that Russia might again seek influence in Afghanistan. It has offered humanitarian and some military aid to the new government. Several members of the interim administration, including Karzai and Defense Minister Fahim, have visited Moscow since the administration took over.

Central Asian States¹⁷

Former communist elites still in power in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan have grown increasingly concerned that Central Asian radical Islamic movements are receiving safe haven in Afghanistan. In 1996, several of them banded together with Russia and China into a regional grouping called the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to discuss the threat emanating from Afghanistan's Taliban regime. The organization groups China, Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. Of the Central Asian states that border Afghanistan, two of them – Uzbekistan and Tajikistan – had seen themselves as particularly vulnerable to militants harbored by the Taliban. Uzbekistan saw its ally, Abdul Rashid Dostam, the Uzbek commander in northern Afghanistan, lose most of his influence in 1998, although he has now regained power in the north. Prior to the U.S. war on the Taliban and Al Qaeda, Uzbek officials had previously said that more active support from Uzbekistan would not have enabled Dostam to overturn Taliban control of the north.¹⁸

¹⁶ Risen, James. "Russians Are Back in Afghanistan, Aiding Rebels." *New York Times*, July 27, 1998.

¹⁷ For further information, see CRS Report RL30294. *Central Asia's Security: Issues and Implications for U.S. Interests*. December 7, 1999.

¹⁸ CRS conversations with Uzbek government officials in Tashkent. April 1999.

Uzbekistan has long asserted that the group Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), allegedly responsible for four simultaneous February 1999 bombings in Tashkent that nearly killed President Islam Karimov, is linked to Al Qaeda.¹⁹ One of its leaders, Juma Namangani, reportedly was killed while commanding Taliban/Al Qaeda forces in the battle for Mazar-e-Sharif in November 2001. Uzbekistan has been highly supportive of the United States in the wake of the September 11 attacks and has placed military facilities at U.S. disposal for use in the combat against the Taliban and Al Qaeda. About 1,000 U.S. troops from the 10th Mountain Division, as well as U.S. aircraft, have been based at the Khanabad air base there. Following the fall of the Taliban, in December 2001 Uzbekistan reopened the Soviet-built “Friendship Bridge” over the Amu Darya river in order to facilitate the flow of aid into Uzbekistan. Uzbek officials in Tashkent told CRS in May 2002 that the defeat of the Taliban has made them somewhat less anxious about the domestic threat from the IMU.

Over the past few years, Tajikistan has feared that its buffer with Afghanistan would disappear if the Taliban defeated the Northern Alliance, whose territorial base borders Tajikistan. Some of the IMU members based in Afghanistan, including Namangani, fought alongside the Islamic opposition United Tajik Opposition (UTO) during the 1994-1997 civil war in that country. Tajikistan, heavily influenced by Russia, whose 25,000 troops guards the border with Afghanistan, initially sent mixed signals on the question of whether it would give the United States the use of military facilities in Tajikistan. However, on September 26, 2001, Moscow officially endorsed the use by the United States of military facilities in Tajikistan, paving the way for Tajikistan to open facilities for U.S. use. In early November 2001, following a visit by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, Tajikistan agreed to allow the coalition to use three air bases in that country.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan do not directly border Afghanistan. However, IMU guerrillas have transited Kyrgyzstan during past incursions into Uzbekistan.²⁰ Kazakhstan had begun to diplomatically engage the Taliban over the past year, but it publicly supported the U.S. war effort against the Taliban. In early December 2001, Kyrgyzstan offered to host U.S. warplanes, and U.S. and French aircraft, including U.S. Marine F-18 strike aircraft, have been using the international airport at Manas as a base for combat flights in Afghanistan.²¹ Kyrgyzstan said in March 2002 that there is no time limit on the U.S. use of military facilities there.

Of the Central Asian states that border Afghanistan, only Turkmenistan was not alarmed at Taliban gains and chose to seek close relations with the Taliban leadership. An alternate interpretation is that Turkmenistan viewed engagement with the Taliban as a more effective means of preventing spillover of radical Islamic activity from Afghanistan. Turkmenistan’s leadership also saw Taliban control as bringing the peace and stability that would permit construction of a natural gas

¹⁹ The IMU was named a foreign terrorist organization by the State Department in September 2000.

²⁰ *Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1999*, pp. 14, 92.

²¹ Some information based on CRS visit to the Manas facility in Kyrgyzstan, May 2002.

pipeline from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan. That pipeline would help Turkmenistan bring its large gas reserves to world markets. However, the September 11 events stoked Turkmenistan's fears of the Taliban and its Al Qaeda guests and the country supported the U.S. anti-terrorism effort. There are no indications the United States requested basing rights in Turkmenistan.

China

China has a small border with a sliver of Afghanistan known as the "Wakhan corridor" (see map) and had become increasingly concerned about the potential for Al Qaeda to promote Islamic fundamentalism among Muslims (Uighurs) in northwestern China. A number of Uighurs fought in Taliban and Al Qaeda ranks in the U.S.-led war. China expressed its concern through active membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, as noted above. In December 2000, sensing China's increasing concern about Taliban policies, a Chinese official delegation met with Mullah Umar at the Taliban's invitation.

Although it has long been concerned about the threat from the Taliban and bin Laden, China did not enthusiastically support U.S. military action against the Taliban. Many experts believe this is because China, as a result of strategic considerations, was wary of a U.S. military buildup on its doorstep. China is an ally with Pakistan, in part to balance out India, which China sees as a rival. Pakistan's cooperation with the United States appears to have allayed China's opposition to U.S. military action, and President Bush praised China's cooperation with the anti-terrorism effort during his visit to China in October 2001. There were no indications of U.S.-China strains on this issue during President Bush's visit to Beijing in late February 2002.

Saudi Arabia

During the Soviet occupation, Saudi Arabia channeled hundreds of millions of dollars to the Afghan resistance, and particularly to hardline Sunni Muslim fundamentalist resistance leaders. Saudi Arabia, which itself practices the strict Wahhabi brand of Islam practiced by the Taliban, was one of three countries to formally recognize the Taliban government. (The others are Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates.) The Taliban initially served Saudi Arabia as a potential counter to Iran, with which Saudi Arabia has been at odds since Iran's 1979 revolution. However, Iranian-Saudi relations have improved significantly since 1997, and balancing Iranian power has ebbed as a factor motivating Saudi policy toward Afghanistan. Instead, drawing on its intelligence ties to Afghanistan during the anti-Soviet war, Saudi Arabia worked with Taliban leaders to persuade them to suppress anti-Saudi activities by Al Qaeda. Saudi Arabia apparently believed that Al Qaeda's presence in Afghanistan drew Saudi Islamic radicals away from Saudi Arabia itself and thereby reduced their opportunity to destabilize the Saudi regime. Some press reports indicate that, in late 1998, Saudi and Taliban leaders discussed, but did not agree on, a plan for a panel of Saudi and Afghan Islamic scholars to decide bin Laden's fate. In March 2000 and again in May 2000, the Saudi-based Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) sponsored indirect peace talks in Saudi Arabia between the warring factions, but the talks were not productive.

According to U.S. officials, Saudi Arabia has generally cooperated with the U.S. war effort. Along with the UAE, Saudi Arabia broke diplomatic relations with the Taliban in late September. It quietly permitted the United States to use a Saudi base for command of U.S. air operations over Afghanistan. It did not serve as a staging point for U.S. aircraft to launch strikes on Afghanistan from Saudi bases, although, among the Gulf states, Oman served as a better staging point due to its closer proximity to Afghanistan. The Saudi position has generally been to allow the United States the use of its facilities as long as doing so is not publicly requested or highly publicized.

U.S. Policy Issues

U.S. policy objectives in Afghanistan have long been multifaceted, although in recent years U.S. goals had largely narrowed to ending the presence of the leadership of the Al Qaeda leadership and infrastructure there. Since the Soviet withdrawal, returning peace and stability to Afghanistan has been a U.S. goal, pursued with varying degrees of intensity. Other goals have included an end to discrimination against women and girls, the eradication of narcotics production, and alleviating severe humanitarian difficulties.

The United States attributed most of these concerns to Taliban rule, although drug production flourished in regions under Northern Alliance control and there were some restrictions on women's rights under Rabbani's 1992-1996 government. U.S. relations with the Taliban progressively deteriorated during the 5 years that the Taliban were in power in Kabul. The United States had withheld recognition of Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan and formally recognized no faction as the government, although it had a dialogue with all the different factions, including the Taliban. During the period of Taliban rule, the United Nations, based on the lack of broad international recognition of Taliban, continued to seat representatives of the former Rabbani government, not the Taliban. The United States closed its embassy in Kabul in January 1989, and the State Department ordered the Afghan embassy in Washington, D.C. closed in August 1997 because of a power struggle within the embassy between Rabbani and Taliban supporters.

Although press reports in May 2002 said the Bush Administration was considering a plan to give military aid to the Northern Alliance prior to the September 11 attacks, the Bush Administration continued the previous Administration's policy of maintaining a dialogue with the Taliban. During the Clinton Administration, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Karl Inderfurth and other U.S. officials met periodically with Taliban officials. In April 1998, then Ambassador Bill Richardson met with Taliban officials and the opposition during his visit to Afghanistan, in an effort to demonstrate presidential commitment to peace in Afghanistan and to discuss bin Laden. In compliance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1333, in February 2001 the State Department ordered the closing of a Taliban representative office in New York. The Taliban complied with the directive, but its representative, Abdul Hakim Mujahid, continued to operate informally. In March 2001, Bush Administration officials received a Taliban envoy, Rahmatullah Hashemi, to discuss bilateral issues. Three State Department officers

visited Afghanistan in April 2001, the first U.S. visit since the August 1998 bombings of Afghan camps, although the visit was primarily to assess humanitarian needs and not to further U.S.-Taliban relations.

As did the executive branch, Congress became highly critical of the Taliban well before the September 11 attacks. Congress' views were generally expressed in non-binding legislation. A sense of the Senate resolution (S.Res. 275) that resolving the Afghan civil war should be a top U.S. priority passed that chamber by unanimous consent on September 24, 1996. H.Con.Res. 218, which was similar to this resolution, passed the House on April 28, 1998. In the 107th Congress, H.Con.Res. 26 was introduced on February 8, 2001. The resolution expressed the sense of Congress that the United States should seek to prevent the Taliban from obtaining Afghanistan's U.N. seat and should not recognize any government in Afghanistan that does not restore women's rights.

After September 11, legislative proposals on Afghanistan became significantly more adversarial toward the Taliban. One bill, H.R. 3088, stated that it should be the policy of the United States to remove the Taliban from power and authorized a drawdown of up to \$300 million worth of U.S. military supplies and services for the anti-Taliban opposition. The bill, as well as another bill (H.R. 2998, introduced October 2, 2001), would establish a "Radio Free Afghanistan" broadcasting service under RFE/RL. On February 12, 2002, the House passed the Senate version of H.R. 2998 providing \$17 million funding for the radio broadcasts for FY2002. President Bush signed the bill into law on March 11, 2002 (P.L. 107-148).

Harboring of Al Qaeda

Even before the September 11, 2001 attacks, the Taliban's refusal to yield Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden to the United States (or a U.S. ally) for trial – and its protection of radical Islamic movements more broadly – had become the overriding bilateral agenda item in U.S. policy toward Afghanistan.²² Bin Laden, identified by the Bush Administration as the main organizer of the September 11 attacks, reportedly remains alive in Afghanistan or Pakistan, attempting to avoid U.S. efforts to locate him and his associates.

Over the past few years, the United States had placed progressively more pressure on the Taliban to extradite bin Laden, adding sanctions, military action, and the threat of further punishments to ongoing diplomatic efforts.

- During his April 1998 visit, Ambassador Richardson asked Taliban to hand bin Laden over to U.S. authorities, but he was rebuffed.
- On August 20, 1998, the United States fired cruise missiles at alleged bin Laden-controlled terrorist training camps in retaliation

²² For more information on bin Laden and his Al Qaeda organization, see CRS Report RL31119, *Terrorism: Near Eastern Groups and State Sponsors, 2001, September 10, 2001*. See also CRS Report RS20411, *Afghanistan: Connections to Islamic Movements in Central and South Asia and Southern Russia*.

for the August 7, 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

- On July 4, 1999, because of the Taliban's hosting of bin Laden, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13129, imposing a ban on U.S. trade with Taliban-controlled portions of Afghanistan and blocking Taliban assets in U.S. financial institutions. The Taliban was not designated as a terrorist group, nor was Afghanistan named a state sponsor of terrorism. On August 10, 1999, the Clinton Administration determined that Ariana Airlines represents Taliban-controlled property, thereby preventing Americans from using the airline and triggering the blocking of about \$500,000 in Ariana assets identified in the United States.
- On October 15, 1999, with Russian support, the United States achieved adoption of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1267, the first U.N. resolution sanctioning the Taliban regime. The resolution banned flights outside Afghanistan by Ariana airlines and directed U.N. member states to freeze Taliban assets. The resolution was in response to the Taliban's refusal to hand bin Laden over to justice, and it threatened further sanctions if it did not do so.

On December 19, 2000, again by combining diplomatic forces with Russia, the United States achieved adoption of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1333, a follow-on to Resolution 1267, imposing even stricter sanctions against the Taliban. The major additional provisions of the Resolution included: (1) a worldwide prohibition against the provision of arms or military advice to the Taliban, and a requirement (directed against Pakistan) that all countries withdraw any military advisers that are helping the Taliban; (2) a call for all countries that recognize the Taliban to reduce the size of Taliban representative missions in their countries, and for all other countries to close completely all Taliban offices and Ariana Afghan airline offices and ban all nonhumanitarian assistance flights into or out of Taliban-controlled Afghanistan; (3) a requirement that all countries freeze any bin Laden/Al Qaeda assets that can be identified; (4) a prohibition on any supply to areas under Taliban control of the chemical acetic anhydride, which is used to produce heroin; and (5) a ban on foreign travel by all Taliban officials at or above the rank of Deputy Minister, except for the purposes of participation in peace negotiations, compliance with the resolution or 1267, or humanitarian reasons, including religious obligations.

On July 30, 2001, the U.N. Security Council adopted an implementing Resolution 1363. The resolution provided for the stationing of monitors in Pakistan, to ensure that no weapons or military advice was being provided by the Taliban. Pakistan's pledge to cooperate with the U.S. response to the September 11, 2001 attacks led to the virtual end of Pakistan's supply of arms and military advice to the Taliban. In the aftermath of the Taliban's ouster from power, these provisions were narrowed to focus on Al Qaeda, and not the Taliban, by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1390 of January 17, 2002. Ariana has resumed some international service, limited mainly by its lack of equipment and resources.

Human Rights/Treatment of Women

The groups that have assumed power from the Taliban are widely considered far less repressive of women than was the Taliban, although some of the factions now ruling the country have been accused of other major human rights abuses in the past. Taliban human rights practices, and especially its treatment of women, received U.S. and international condemnation. Seeking to enforce its brand of puritan Islam, the Taliban subjected women to limitations on social participation, working, and education. At various times in the past, the Taliban's treatment of women had forced many United Nations and other aid organizations, including the U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, Save the Children, and Oxfam, to cut back or cease operations, either in protest or for lack of available (female) staff.²³ Women were forced to wear a head-to-toe veil (*burqa*) in public, and they could not ride in vehicles unless accompanied by a male relative.

Following the Taliban collapse, women in Kabul are said to be reverting to the less restrictive behavior practiced before the Taliban fled. The burqa is no longer obligatory, although many women continue to wear it by tradition or because of fear or uncertainty of the new government's attitudes on the issue. Two women hold positions in the new interim cabinet that took office on December 22, 2001, and many women are returning to the jobs they held before the Taliban came to power. As noted above, girls returned to school March 23, 2002, for the first time since the Taliban took over, and many female teachers have resumed their teaching jobs.

Before the war, there was significant U.S. and U.N. pressure on the Taliban regime to moderate its treatment of women. Several U.N. Security Council resolutions, including 1193 (August 28, 1998), and 1214 (December 8, 1998), urged the Taliban to end discrimination against women. During a November 1997 visit to Pakistan, then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright attacked Taliban policies as despicable and intolerable. U.S. women's rights groups like Feminist Majority and the National Organization for Women (NOW) mobilized to stop the Clinton Administration from recognizing the Taliban government unless it alters its treatment of women. On May 5, 1999, the Senate passed S.Res. 68, a resolution calling on the President not to recognize any Afghan government that refuses to end discrimination against women. On November 27, 2001, the House unanimously adopted S. 1573, the Afghan Women and Children Relief Act, which had earlier passed the Senate. The law (signed December 12, 2001) calls for the use of supplemental funding (appropriated by P.L. 107-38) to fund educational and health programs for Afghan women and children.

Destruction of Buddha Statues. The Taliban's critics pointed to its March 2001 destruction of two large Buddha statues, dating to the 7th century, as evidence of the Taliban's excesses. The Taliban claimed it ordered the destruction of the statues, which it considered un-Islamic, after representatives of the United Nations Economic, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) offered to fund preservation of the statues. Others believe the move was a reaction to new U.N.

²³ Cooper, Kenneth, "Kabul Women Under Virtual House Arrest." *Washington Post*, October 7, 1996. A1.

sanctions imposed in December 2000 (see below). The destruction provoked widespread condemnation, even among other Islamic states, including Pakistan. Some international groups are looking at the possibility of rebuilding the statues, although at least one group has said doing so will be extremely difficult technically.

Hindu Badges. In May 2001, the Taliban said it was considering requiring non-Muslims to wear identity labels on their clothing to distinguish them from Muslims. The Taliban explained the move as an effort to prevent non-Muslims from being harassed by Taliban security forces for not attending Muslim prayer, which is compulsory for Muslims. The announcement received worldwide condemnation and was not implemented before the Taliban was ousted. There are believed to be only two Jews left in Afghanistan, so the move was not viewed as being directed against Jews, even though the policy evoked memories of the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany.

On the other hand, many say that the Taliban brought order and peace to the areas it captured by disarming independent militiamen. By imposing central authority and cracking down on banditry, it opened some roads to free commerce leading to a greater availability of food in many areas under its control. Press accounts say that the streets were safer, fewer people carried guns, and there were very few murders during Taliban rule.²⁴ Others add that Taliban rule approximated the traditional practice of Islam found in those parts of Afghanistan dominated by Pashtuns and did not represent a radical departure for Afghanistan.

Since the interim administration took office, there have been some reports of reprisals and other abuses based on ethnicity in certain parts of Afghanistan, particularly against Pashtuns living in largely Tajik and Uzbek northern Afghanistan. Virtually all observers agree that Afghans are freer than they were under the Taliban, although the interim administration is relatively young, and many want to evaluate its human rights practices over a longer period of time.

Counternarcotics

One issue on which the Taliban apparently satisfied much of the international community was counternarcotics. The Taliban apparently enforced its July 2000 ban on poppy cultivation. In February 2001, U.N. International Drug Control Program (UNDCP) officials said that surveys showed a dramatic drop in poppy cultivation in the areas surveyed.²⁵ The Northern Alliance did not issue a similar ban in areas it controlled. Despite the Taliban's performance on drug issues, in March 2002, Afghanistan was determined by the Bush Administration to have "failed demonstrably to make substantial efforts" during the past 12 months to adhere to international counternarcotics agreements and take certain counternarcotics measures set forth in U.S. law. (This is equivalent to the listing by the United States, as Afghanistan has been listed every year since 1987, as a state that is uncooperative

²⁴ Schork, Kurt, "Taleban Admits To Problem Of Image, Not Substance." Reuters, November 25, 1997.

²⁵ Crossette, Barbara. "Taliban Seem to Be Making Good on Opium Ban, U.N. Says." *New York Times*, February 7, 2001.

with U.S. efforts to eliminate drug trafficking or has failed to take sufficient steps on its own to curb trafficking.) With the Taliban defeated, President Bush waived sanctions resulting from this listing on the grounds that providing assistance is in the vital national interest of the United States (see section on sanctions, below).

In April 2001, amid signs the Taliban was enforcing its poppy ban, the United States began funding a UNDCP program to assist former poppy cultivators in Afghanistan. The United States contributed \$1.5 million to that crop substitution program in FY2001. The Bonn agreement mentions the need for a post-Taliban Afghanistan government to prevent Afghanistan's re-emergence as a haven for drug cultivation, and the Bush Administration is focusing some post-Taliban resources on counter-narcotics. In early February 2002, the U.S. military exerted pressure on Afghan opium dealers in Qandahar to close the operations of their market. This came amid Bush Administration warnings that opium trafficking and heroin processing had continued unabated in 2001, suggesting substantial stockpiling despite the Taliban ban. In addition, preliminary estimates indicated that the spring 2002 opium poppy crop might return to levels reached before the Taliban ban. The U.N. Drug Control Program estimated in February 2002 that 111,000 - 160,000 acres of opium poppy had been planted, which could yield 2,000 - 3,000 tons of crop, restoring Afghanistan to its previous place as the world's top opium producer.²⁶ On the other hand, the U.S. military is opposed to its conducting poppy crop eradication in Afghanistan, as some in the Bush Administration are proposing.²⁷

Retrieval of U.S. Stingers

Beginning in late 1985 and following an internal debate, the Reagan Administration provided "hundreds" of man-portable "Stinger" anti-aircraft missiles to the mujahedin for use against Soviet combat helicopters and aircraft. Prior to the U.S.-led war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, common estimates among experts suggested that 200-300 Stingers remained at large in Afghanistan out of about 1,000 provided during the war against the Soviet Union.²⁸ In the aftermath of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the United States had tried to retrieve the at-large Stingers.²⁹ The United States feared that the missiles could fall into the hands of terrorist groups for possible use against civilian airliners. Iran bought 16 of the missiles in 1987 and fired one against U.S. helicopters; some reportedly were transferred to Lebanese Hizballah, according to press reports in January 2002. India claimed that it was a Stinger, supplied to Islamic rebels in Kashmir probably by sympathizers in Afghanistan, that shot down an Indian helicopter over Kashmir in May 1999.³⁰

²⁶ Armitage, Tom. U.N. Sees Afghan Opium Cultivation Soaring in 2002. *Reuters*, February 28, 2002.

²⁷ Gertz, Bill. Military Opposes Spraying Poppies. *Washington Times*, March 25, 2002.

²⁸ Saleem, Farrukh. Where Are the Missing Stinger Missiles? Pakistan, *Friday Times*. August 17-23, 2001.

²⁹ Gertz, Bill. Stinger Bite Feared in CIA. *Washington Times*, October 9, 2000.

³⁰ "U.S.-Made Stinger Missiles – Mobile and Lethal." *Reuters*, May 28, 1999.

The practical difficulties of retrieving the weapons had caused this issue to fade from the U.S. agenda for Afghanistan. In 1992, the United States reportedly spent about \$10 million to buy the Stingers back, at a premium, from individual mujahedin commanders. The *New York Times* reported on July 24, 1993, that the buy back effort failed because the United States was competing with other buyers, including Iran and North Korea, and that the CIA would spend about \$55 million in FY1994 in a renewed Stinger buy-back effort. On March 7, 1994, the *Washington Post* reported that the CIA had recovered only a fraction of the at-large Stingers. Many observers speculate that the CIA program retrieved perhaps 50 or 100 Stingers. According to Defense Intelligence Agency testimony in 1996,³¹ an unspecified number of man-portable surface-to-air missiles (Stingers) remain in Afghanistan.³²

The Stinger issue resurfaced in conjunction with the U.S. war effort. U.S. pilots reported that the Taliban fired some Stingers at U.S. aircraft during the war, but they recorded no hits. Any Stingers that survived the anti-Taliban war are likely controlled by Afghans now allied to the United States and would presumably pose less of a threat. In early February 2002, the interim government collected and returned to the United States “dozens” of Stingers and said it would continue to try to find and return additional Stingers.³³

Landmine Eradication

Landmines laid during the Soviet occupation constitute one of the principal dangers to the Afghan people. The United Nations estimates that 5 -7 million mines remain scattered throughout the country, although some estimates by outside organizations are significantly lower. An estimated 400,000 Afghans have been killed or wounded by landmines. U.N. teams have succeeded in destroying one million mines and are now focusing on de-mining priority-use, residential and commercial property, including land surrounding Kabul. As shown in the U.S. aid table for FY1999-FY2002, the United States Humanitarian Demining Program provides about \$3 million per year for Afghanistan demining activities. Most of the funds go to the HALO Trust, a British organization, and the U.N. Mine Action Program for Afghanistan.

Assistance and Reconstruction

Since the Soviet invasion, Afghanistan has faced major humanitarian problems, some of which deteriorated further under Taliban rule. In addition to 3.6 million Afghan refugees at the start of the U.S.-led war,³⁴ another 500,000 Afghans were displaced internally even before U.S. military action began, according to Secretary

³¹ John Moore, before the House International Relations Committee. May 9, 1996.

³² Common estimates in a variety of press reports suggest that 200-300 Stingers may remain at large in Afghanistan.

³³ Fullerton, John. “Afghan Authorities Hand in Stinger Missiles to U.S.” *Reuters*, February 4, 2002.

³⁴ About 1.4 million Afghan refugees are in Iran; 1.2 million in Pakistan; 20,000 in Russia; 17,000 in India, and 9,000 in the Central Asian states.

General Annan's April 19, 2001 report on Afghanistan. Many of the displaced persons had fled the effects of a major drought that affected the 85% of the population that directly depends on agriculture. Some Afghan refugees are now members of a third generation to live outside Afghanistan, although many are beginning to return now that the Taliban has fallen from power in Kabul, and repatriation has accelerated in spring 2002.

The conflicts in Afghanistan, including the war against the Soviet Union, have reportedly left about 2 million dead, 700,000 widows and orphans and about one million Afghan children who were born and raised in refugee camps outside Afghanistan.

Casualties. No reliable Afghan casualty figures for the U.S.-led war on the Taliban and Al Qaeda have been announced, but estimates by researchers of Afghan civilian deaths generally cite figures of "several hundred" civilian deaths. (U.S. Central Command said in April 2002 that there had been 41 deaths involving U.S. and allied military personnel in the war as of that time. The 22 "hostile deaths" – which include friendly fire – are 17 U.S., 4 Canadian, and 1 Australian. All 19 "non-hostile" deaths – accidents – have been Americans.

As part of its military operations, the United States air-dropped food rations to help alleviate suffering. Following the Taliban collapse, aid routes via Uzbekistan and Pakistan reopened, largely eliminating the need for the airdrops. The United Nations continues to coordinate humanitarian relief efforts through the U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and UNOCHA (U.N. Office of the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs in Afghanistan). UNHCR supervises Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan and Afghan repatriation.

U.S. Assistance Issues. To address humanitarian concerns, the United States had become the largest single provider of assistance to the Afghan people, even before the crisis triggered by the September 11 attacks. In 1985, the United States began a cross-border aid program for Afghanistan, through which aid was distributed in Afghanistan, via U.S. aid workers in Pakistan. However, citing budgetary constraints and the difficulty of administering a cross-border program, there was no USAID mission for Afghanistan after the end of FY1994, and U.S. aid has been provided through various channels, mostly U.N. agencies and NGO's.

Primarily because of a drought and the widely publicized suffering of the Afghan people, U.S. aid to the Afghan people in FY2001 greatly exceeded that provided in FY2000 or FY1999. No U.S. assistance went directly to the Taliban government. **Table 2** breaks down FY1999-FY2002 aid by program. According to the USAID fact sheet issued September 27, 2001, the United States provided about \$183 million in assistance to the Afghan people in FY2001. For a history of U.S. aid to Afghanistan (FY1978-FY1998), see **Table 3**.

On October 4, 2001, in an effort to demonstrate that the United States has an interest in the welfare of the Afghan people and not just the defeat of the Taliban, President Bush announced that humanitarian aid to the Afghan people would total about \$320 million for FY2002. This includes food, blankets, medicine, and shelter

for Afghan refugees in states bordering Afghanistan and the people inside Afghanistan. The amounts provided thus far in FY2002 are listed in the table; the figures include both humanitarian and reconstruction aid, totaling over \$420 million for FY2002 as of June 7, 2002. The conference report on the FY2002 foreign aid appropriation (H. Rept. 107-354, P.L. 107-115) contains a sense of Congress provision that the United States should contribute substantial humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, although no dollar figures are mentioned.

Reconstruction Aid. The United States also pledged substantial reconstruction assistance for a post-Taliban Afghanistan. Common estimates of reconstruction needs run up to about \$10 billion. In conjunction with a donors' conference in Tokyo during January 20-21, 2002, the United States pledged \$296 million in reconstruction aid for Afghanistan for FY2002. That amount is drawn from existing FY2002 appropriations and the emergency September 11-related supplemental appropriation enacted in September 2001.

U.S. reconstruction funds have been used for various "quick impact" programs. These programs included \$6.5 million for 9.7 million school textbooks; \$7 million for agricultural rehabilitation, programs for women, and support to the interim administration; \$5 million for health services infrastructure; \$1 million for the rehabilitation of landmine victims and other disabled persons (Leahy War Victims Fund); and funding to rebuild the Ministry of Women's Affairs building and to distribute radios to localities to disseminate information on humanitarian aid. The United States is forwarding donations from American citizens for the rebuilding of Kabul University.

At the donors' conference, the following additional reconstruction pledges were announced: European Union - \$500 million in 2002; Japan - \$500 million over the next 30 months; Germany - \$362 million over the next 4 years; Saudi Arabia - \$220 million over the next 3 years; Iran - \$560 million over the next 5 years; Pakistan - \$100 million over the next 5 years; India - a \$100 million line of credit; South Korea - \$45 million over 30 months; and United Kingdom - \$86 million in 2002. Total pledges in Tokyo for reconstruction amounted to \$1.8 billion to be spent in 2002 and \$4.5 billion over the next 5 years.

A bill, H.R. 3994, which was marked up by the House International Relations Committee on March 19, 2002 and passed by the House on May 21, 2002, authorizes \$1.05 billion in U.S. reconstruction assistance during FY2002 - FY2005 (\$200 million in FY2002; \$300 million in each of FY2003 and FY2004, and \$250 million in FY2005). The bill also authorizes \$15 million per year for FY2002-2005 for counternarcotics, and \$10 million per year for FY2002-2005 for the *loya jirga* and local political development. The House-passed FY2002 supplemental appropriation (H.R. 4775) would provide \$370 million in additional aid to Afghanistan, \$120 million more than the FY2002 supplemental funding requested by the Bush Administration in March 2002. These funds would likely be used for U.S. aid to Afghanistan, humanitarian and reconstruction, during FY2003.

In addition, the U.S. Treasury Department (Office of Foreign Assets Control, OFAC) has unblocked over \$145 million in assets of Afghan government owned banking entities that were frozen under U.S. sanctions imposed on the Taliban in

1999 (see below). These funds are to be used by the new government for currency stabilization, not for recurring costs of the interim government. Most of the funds consist of gold that will be held in Afghanistan's name in the United States to back up Afghanistan's currency. In January 2002, the United States also has agreed to provide \$50 million in credit for U.S. investment in Afghanistan, provided by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). The United States also has successfully pressed the International Air Transport Association to pay Afghanistan \$20 million in overflight fees that were withheld because of U.N. sanctions on the Taliban. In April 2002, OFAC unblocked \$17 million in privately-owned Afghan assets. In May 2002, the World Bank reopened its office in Afghanistan after twenty years.

Promoting Long-Term Economic Development

In an effort to find a long-term solution to Afghanistan's acute humanitarian problems, the United States has, when feasible, tried to promote major development projects as a means of improving Afghan living standards and political stability over the long term. During 1996-98, the Administration supported proposed natural gas and oil pipelines through western Afghanistan as an incentive for the warring factions to cooperate. One proposal by a consortium led by Los Angeles-based Unocal Corporation³⁵ was for a Central Asia Oil Pipeline (CAOP) that would originate at the Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan border and extend through the western region of Afghanistan to Pakistan. A \$2.5 billion Central Asia Gas Pipeline (CentGas) would originate in southern Turkmenistan and pass through Afghanistan to Pakistan, with possible extensions into India.

The deterioration in U.S.-Taliban relations since 1998 largely ended hopes for the pipeline projects while the Taliban was in power. Immediately after the August 20, 1998 U.S. strikes on bin Laden's bases in Afghanistan, Unocal suspended all its Afghan pipeline-related activities, including a U.S.-based training program for Afghans who were expected to work on the project. With few prospects of improved U.S. relations with Taliban, Unocal withdrew from its consortium in December 1998. Saudi Delta Oil was made interim project leader, although Delta lacked the financing and technology to make the consortium viable. The rival consortium led by Bidas of Argentina reportedly continued to try to win approval for its proposal to undertake the project. In a summit meeting in late May 2002 between the leaders of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, the three countries agreed to revive the gas pipeline project.

³⁵ Other participants in the Unocal consortium include: Delta of Saudi Arabia, Hyundai of South Korea, Crescent Steel of Pakistan, Itochu Corporation and INPEX of Japan, and the government of Turkmenistan. Some accounts say Russia's Gazprom would probably receive a stake in the project. Moscow Nezavisimaya Gazeta, October 30, 1997. Page 3.

Table 1. Major Factions in Afghanistan

Party/Commander	Leader	Ideology/ Ethnicity	Areas of Control
Taliban	Mullah (Islamic cleric) Muhammad Umar	ultra-orthodox Islamic, Pashtun	Small pockets throughout Afghanistan; no representation in interim government.
Northern Alliance/Islamic Society (dominant party in the Northern Alliance)	Burhannudin Rabbani (political leader), Muhammad Fahim (military leader)	moderate Islamic, mostly Tajik	Most of northern and western Afghanistan, including Kabul; 17 out of 30 cabinet seats in interim administration, including defense, foreign ministry, and interior ministry. Rabbani holds no official position.
Forces of Ismail Khan (part of Northern Alliance)	Ismail Khan	Tajik	Herat Province and environs; Khan's son in interim cabinet.
Eastern Shura (loosely allied with Northern Alliance)	Hajji Abdul Qadir	moderate Islamic, Pashtun	Jalalabad and environs; Qadir is in interim administration.
National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan (part of Northern Alliance)	Abdul Rashid Dostam	secular, Uzbek	Mazar Sharif and environs; Dostam is deputy defense minister in interim government.
Hizb-e-Wahdat (part of Northern Alliance)	Abd al-Karim Khalili	Shiite, Hazara tribes	Bamiyan province.
Independent Pashtun Commanders	Ghul Agha Shirzai, and other tribal leaders	mostly orthodox Islamic, Pashtun	Southern Afghanistan, including Qandahar;

Table 2. U.S. Aid to Afghanistan in FY1999-FY2002
(\$ in millions)

	FY1999	FY2000	FY2001	FY2002 (as of 6/7)
Demining Program	\$2.615	\$3.0	\$2.8	
U.S. Department of Agriculture (DOA) and USAID Food For Peace, via World Food Program(WFP)	\$42.0 worth of wheat (100,000 metric tons) under DOA's "416(b)" program.	\$68.875 for 165,000 metric tons. Of this, 60,000 tons were for May 2000 drought relief.	\$131.0 (300,000 metric tons under P.L.480, Title II, and 416(b)	\$159.6 for food commodities
WFP and the Aga Khan Foundation	\$2.6 for Afghan refugees inside Afghanistan	\$14.0 for the same purpose		
State/Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) via UNHCR and ICRC	\$16.95 for Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran, and to assist their repatriation	\$14.03 for the same purposes	\$22.03 for similar purposes	\$98.5 to U.N. agencies
State Department/ Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)	\$7.0 to various NGO's to aid Afghans inside Afghanistan	\$6.68 for drought relief and health, water, and sanitation programs for Afghans	\$18.934 for similar programs	\$90.6 to various U.N. agencies and NGO's
State Department/HDP (Humanitarian Demining Program)				7.0 to Halo Trust and other demining programs
Aid to Afghan Refugees in Pakistan (through various NGO's)	\$5.44, of which \$2.789 went to health and training for Afghan women and girls in Pakistan	\$6.169, of which \$3.82 went to similar purposes	\$5.31 for similar purposes	
U.N. Drug Control Program			\$1.50	

	FY1999	FY2000	FY2001	FY2002 (as of 6/7)
USAID Office of Transition Initiatives			\$0.45 for Afghan women in Pakistan	\$14.3 for broadcasts and UNDP trust to support interim gov't
Dept. of Defense				\$50.9 (aidrop of 2.4 million rations)
Center for Disease Control			\$0.57 polio eradication	
Totals	\$76.6	\$113.2	\$182.6	\$420.98

Table 3. U.S. Assistance to Afghanistan FY1978-1998
(\$ in millions)

Fiscal Year	Devel. Assist.	Econ. Supp. (ESF)	P.L. 480 (Title I and II)	Military	Other (Incl. regional refugee aid)	Total
1978	4.989	–	5.742	0.269	0.789	11.789
1979	3.074	–	7.195	–	0.347	10.616
1980	–	(Soviet invasion - December 1979)			–	–
1981	–	–	–	–	–	–
1982	–	–	–	–	–	–
1983	–	–	–	–	–	–
1984	–	–	–	–	–	–
1985	3.369	–	–	–	–	3.369
1986	–	–	8.9	–	–	8.9
1987	17.8	12.1	2.6	–	–	32.5
1988	22.5	22.5	29.9	–	–	74.9
1989	22.5	22.5	32.6	–	–	77.6
1990	35.0	35.0	18.1	–	–	88.1
1991	30.0	30.0	20.1	–	–	80.1
1992	25.0	25.0	31.4	–	–	81.4
1993	10.0	10.0	18.0	–	30.2	68.2
1994	3.4	2.0	9.0	–	27.9	42.3
1995	1.8	–	12.4	–	31.6	45.8
1996	–	–	16.1	–	26.4	42.5
1997	–	–	18.0	–	31.9*	49.9
1998	–	–	3.6	–	49.14**	52.74

Source: U.S. Department of State.

* Includes \$3 million for demining and \$1.2 million for counternarcotics.

** Includes \$3.3 million in projects targeted for Afghan women and girls, \$7 million in earthquake relief aid, 100,000 tons of 416B wheat worth about \$15 million, \$2 million for demining, and \$1.54 for counternarcotics.

U.S. and International Sanctions

Shoring up a post-Taliban government of Afghanistan with financial and other assistance requires waivers of restrictions or the permanent modification of U.S. and U.N. sanctions previously imposed on Afghanistan. Some of these modifications or waivers are in progress. Sanctions in place include the following:

- On May 2, 1980, Afghanistan was deleted from the list of designated beneficiary countries under the U.S. GSP, denying Afghanistan's exports duty free treatment, by Executive Order 12204 (45 F.R. 20740). This was done under the authority of Section 504 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended [P.L. 93-618; 19 U.S.C. 2464].
- On June 3, 1980, as part of the sanctions against the Soviet Union for the invasion of Afghanistan, the United States imposed controls on exports to Afghanistan of agricultural products, oil and gas exploration and production equipment, and phosphates. This was implemented at 15 CFR Part 373 et seq (45 F.R. 37415) under the authority of Sections 5 and 6 of the Export Administration Act of 1979 [P.L. 96-72; 50 U.S.C. app. 2404, app. 2405]. On April 24, 1981, these sanctions were modified to terminate controls on U.S. exports to Afghanistan of agricultural products and phosphates.
- In mid-1992, the Bush Administration determined that Afghanistan no longer had a "Soviet-controlled government." This opened Afghanistan to the use of U.S. funds made available for the U.S. share of U.N. organizations that provide assistance to Afghanistan.
- On October 7, 1992, President George H.W. Bush issued Presidential Determination 93-3 that Afghanistan is no longer a Marxist-Leninist country. The designation as such a country had prohibited Afghanistan from receiving Export-Import Bank guarantees, insurance, or credits for purchases under Sec. 8 of the 1986 Export-Import Bank Act, which amended Section 2(b)(2) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945 (P.L. 79-173, 12 U.S.C. 635). However, President George H.W. Bush's determination was not implemented before he left office.
- President Bush's October 7, 1992 determination (93-3) also found that assistance to Afghanistan under Section 620D of the Foreign Assistance Act is in the national interest of the United States because of the change of regime in Afghanistan. The presidential determination, had it been implemented in regulations, would have waived restrictions on assistance to Afghanistan provided for in the Act, as amended [P.L. 87-195; 22 U.S.C. 2374]; as added by Section 505 of the International Development Cooperation Act of 1979 [P.L. 96-53]. These provisions prohibit foreign assistance to Afghanistan until it apologizes for the death of U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Adolph Dubs, who was kidnapped in Kabul in 1979 and killed when Afghan police stormed the hideout where he was held, unless the

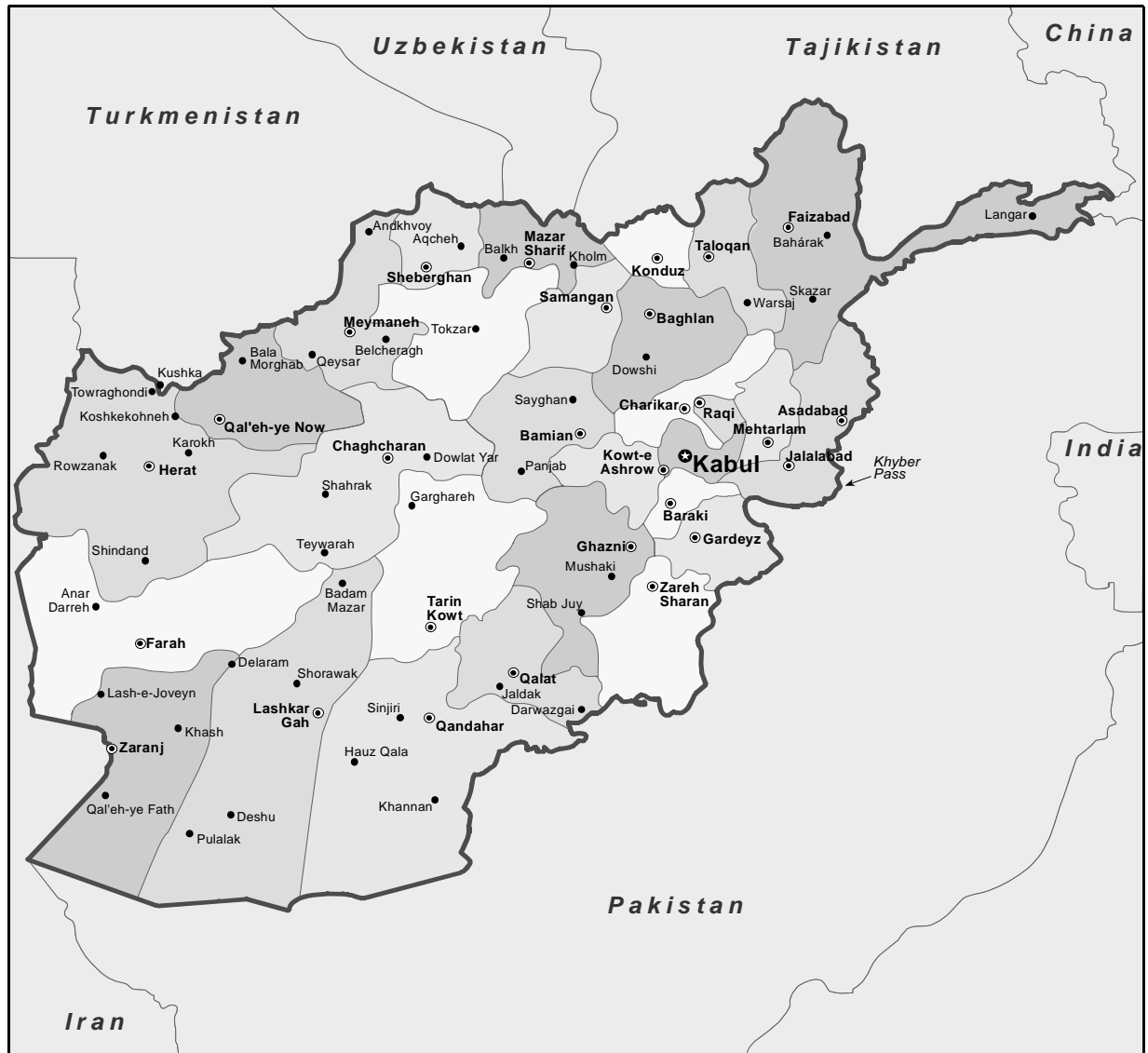
President determines that such assistance is in the national interest because of changed circumstances in Afghanistan.

- On May 3, 2002, President Bush restored normal trade treatment to the products of Afghanistan. Section 552 of the Foreign Assistance Appropriations for FY1986 [P.L. 99-190] authorized the President to deny any U.S. credits or most-favored-nation (MFN) tariff status for Afghanistan. Under that law, on February 18, 1986, the height of the Soviet occupation, President Reagan had issued Presidential Proclamation 5437, suspending (MFN) tariff status for Afghanistan (51 F.R. 4287).
- On March 31, 1993, President Clinton, on national interest grounds, waived restrictions provided for in Section 481 (h) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended [P.L. 87-195]; as amended and restated by Section 2005(a) of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 [P.L. 99-570]. The waiver was renewed in 1994. Mandatory sanctions include bilateral aid cuts and suspensions, including denial of Ex-Im Bank credits; the casting of negative U.S. votes for multilateral development bank loans; and a non-allocation of a U.S. sugar quota. Discretionary sanctions included denial of Generalized System of Preferences (GSP); additional duties on country exports to the United States; and curtailment of air transportation with the United States. *On February 25, 2002, President Bush waived restrictions on FY2002 aid to Afghanistan under this Act.*
- On June 14, 1996, Afghanistan was formally added to the list of countries prohibited from receiving exports or licenses for exports of U.S. defense articles and services. This amended the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (22 CFR Part 121 et seq.) under the authority of Section 38 of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended (P.L. 90-629; 22 U.S.C. 2778) by adding Afghanistan at Section 126.1 of 22 CFR Part 126.
- In a ruling largely redundant with the one above, on May 15, 1997, the State Department designated Afghanistan under the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-132), as a state that is not cooperating with U.S. anti-terrorism efforts. The designation, made primarily because of Taliban's harboring of bin Laden, makes Afghanistan ineligible to receive U.S. exports of items on the U.S. Munitions List. The designation was repeated every year since 1997.
- On July 4, 1999, the President declared a national emergency with respect to Taliban because of its hosting of bin Laden, and issued Executive order 13129 that imposed sanctions. The sanctions include the blocking of Taliban assets and property in the United States, and a ban on U.S. trade with Taliban-controlled areas of Afghanistan. On August 10, 1999, the Administration determined that Ariana Afghan Airlines was a Taliban entity. That

determination triggered a blocking of Ariana assets (about \$500,000) in the United States and a ban on U.S. citizens' flying on the airline. Now that the Taliban has lost power, this ban has ended

- On October 15, 1999, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1267. See section on the harboring of bin Laden for the sanctions imposed under this resolution.
- As noted above, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1333 of December 19, 2000, imposed a number of new sanctions against the Taliban. For the provisions, see the section on the harboring of bin Laden. As noted, this sanction was narrowed to penalize only Al Qaeda by virtue of the adoption of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1390 of January 17, 2002.

Map of Afghanistan



Map adapted by CRS from Magellan Geographix.